



Kentucky Social Studies Teachers use LDC to Design and Implement Inquiry-Based Instruction

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“I had always taught the Constitution, Bill of Rights, Declaration and other important documents, but now my students are truly digging deeper and becoming historical thinkers.”

Amanda Minnich, Woodland Middle School in Kenton County
(Jacobson, 2016, p. 20).

Social studies classes have always been designed to help students develop an understanding of the historical factors that contribute to and influence our individual and collective decisions, rather than the mere memorization of facts and dates. With recent conversations regarding the development of globally competent students in Kentucky, there has been a renewed focus on instruction in the social studies classroom.¹

Teachers throughout Kentucky have embraced tools from the Literacy Design Collaborative ([LDC](#)) to assist with the development of inquiry-based instructional materials. From entire units of instruction to daily lessons focused on targeted skills, Kentucky teachers are leading the way in creating materials to help realize the intent of the *Kentucky Academic Standards*.²

The design process often begins with identifying a compelling question, as illustrated in the following LDC units:

- [Did Lincoln Free The Slaves?](#) Justin Bailey, Magoffin County High School
- [Should the President of the United States have the Power of the Line-item Veto?](#) Bernadette B. Carpenter and Justin R. Bailey, Magoffin County High School
- [How did Television Impact Life in the 1950s and 1960s?](#) Sharon K. Thurman and Steve Goodrid, Daviess County High School

These units address targeted social studies and literacy standards while providing the instructional sequencing necessary for student success. Each unit identifies the learning outcomes, aligns learning activities to identified standards and/or skills necessary to achieve those outcomes, and allows students to develop an understanding of the content through text-based inquiry. Finally, students communicate their understanding through a product at the conclusion of the unit.

Along the path to proficiency, teachers continually provide feedback throughout the LDC module for the explicit purpose of moving the learning forward. Teachers use the identified standards and student work rubrics to provide specific feedback after each mini-task.³ Often this feedback results in applying a score, but not a grade.

In addition to creating LDC units, many Kentucky teachers have created LDC mini-tasks/lessons that target specific practices in the inquiry cycle while demonstrating exemplary teaching practices. The chart below provides several of the most utilized LDC mini-tasks/lessons.

Mini-Task/Lesson	Connection to the Kentucky Framework for Teaching (FfT)
Deconstructed Teaching Task with "I Will ... " statements	Communicating with Students: Expectations for Learning (Domain 3 Component A)
Question Formulation Technique	Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques: Student Participation (Domain 3 Component B)
Reading Like a Historian: Sourcing	Engaging Students in Learning (Domain 3 Component C)
Primary Source Graphic Organizer	Engaging Students in Learning (Domain 3 Component C)
Using Graphic Organizers to Organize Writing	Engaging Students in Learning (Domain 3 Component C)

LDC is more than a curriculum design tool; it is a community of professionals contributing to and seeking to improve their practice. Throughout this process of designing instruction utilizing LDC tools, teachers note the importance of participating in a professional community.⁴

“The opportunities for teachers to collaborate and learn from each other has been a really positive experience for me as an educator,” said Eddie Mullins, a teacher at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (Fayette County), “rich, thought-provoking discussions about not only individual lessons and units, but pedagogy, curriculum and many other relevant topics that have made me a more effective and reflective teacher.” (Jacobson, 2016, p. 20).⁵

Kentucky teachers and others across the nation have spent more than five years building this repository of modules/units and mini-tasks/lessons for others to use. Start your journey with [LDC](#) and the recently added [Facing History](#) mini-task/lesson collection. The resources are free of charge and have been reviewed by national experts to ensure that they are aligned to the standards identified.

Inquiry-based instruction provides the opportunity to align expectations for productive college, career and civic ready students with targeted opportunities for teaching and learning. The tools and resources provided by the Literacy Design Collaborative give educators the resources to fulfill this mission.

For additional information, visit the Kentucky Department of Education’s Literacy Design Collaboration [webpage](#) and/or the Literacy Design Collaborative and Student Growth [webpage](#).

End Notes

1. See [Global Competency](#)
2. See Domain 1, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
3. See Domain 3, Component D, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
4. See Domain 4, Component D, [Kentucky Framework for Teaching](#)
5. See [Principal Performance Standard 1](#)

Works Cited

Jacobson, L. (2016). *Tailored for a Perfect Fit: Flexible Templates Promote Standards Alignment and Teacher Collaboration* JSD: The Learning Forward Journal 37(2), 18-22.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013).
